

**STATEMENT OF WILLIAM D. SHADDOX, ACTING ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 2197, TO MODIFY THE BOUNDARY OF HOPEWELL CULTURE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK IN THE STATE OF OHIO**

**June 14, 2007**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 2197, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to modify the boundary of Hopewell Culture National Historical Park (NHP) at the Seip Earthworks unit to conform with recognizable property lines and landscape features, and to add the Spruce Hill Works unit to the park. The Department supports H.R. 2197.

H.R. 2197 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to modify the boundaries of Hopewell Culture NHP and acquire lands only from willing sellers. This is a critical time for the preservation of the Spruce Hill earthworks. The majority of the property is on the market as a result of the settlement of the estate of the late owner. The owner, a willing seller, had been supportive of the National Park Service (NPS) studies of the site and permitted access by agency archeologists. The trustees of the property have been allowing off-road vehicle rallies on a portion of the site. This off-road vehicle use has damaged a portion of the prehistoric walls. Thanks to a growing coalition of national and local groups the parcel is now under contract for sale to the Arc of Appalachia Preserve and the Archaeological Conservancy; this coalition is willing to assist with preserving and managing the site.

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Spruce Hill is an interesting and unique monumental ceremonial archeological site built approximately 2,000 years ago by the Ohio Hopewell culture. The site encloses the top of a hill on the edge of the Appalachian Plateau and overlooks Paint Creek near the town of Bourneville in Ross County, Ohio. Of the forty or more large monumental Hopewell culture earthworks, less than a dozen are hilltop enclosures. Spruce Hill is one of the larger examples of a hilltop site; its walls enclose 140 acres. It is one of three Hopewellian earthwork sites in the Eastern Woodlands where stone is used to construct its enclosing walls. It also is the only hilltop enclosure in the extensive complex of Hopewell earthworks in the Scioto valley around modern-day Chillicothe. All of the other sites in the vicinity are built on the valley floors. The site also has “enigmatic iron pit furnaces,” which continue to generate ardent discussions among archeologists.

The interest in preserving the Spruce Hill Works dates back to the 1970s. In 1972, the site was added to the National Register of Historic Places. In 1980, Public Law 96-607 added a threatened earthwork site to the park and called on the Secretary to study other Ohio Hopewell culture sites and recommend sites for inclusion in the park. Spruce Hill was considered in this comprehensive study; however, since there had been limited modern archeology done at the site, Spruce Hill was recommended for further study. As a result, when Public Law 102-294 established Hopewell Culture National Historical Park by combining the existing Mound City Group National Monument with three new units, it directed the Secretary to study several other prehistoric Hopewell culture sites as potential additions to the park, including Spruce Hill.

Between 1995 and 1998, NPS archeologists were allowed access to Spruce Hill by the landowner. They conducted investigations and prepared preliminary findings and a summary

report by 1998. This report found the site significant and suitable for addition to the park. The report concluded that Spruce Hill is an outstanding example of a particular type of Hopewell culture monumental architecture, the hilltop enclosure, of which about dozen are known and only one other, Fort Ancient State Memorial, a National Historic Landmark, compares to it in size. The site also is associated with early developments in American archeology and specifically with discussions of the origin and builders of the monumental earthworks in the eastern United States. The site has important natural resources as well, including vernal pools, breeding habitat for grassland birds whose populations are in decline in Ohio, and will help preserve the watershed of Paint Creek, a stream designated as Outstanding State Waters. The site offers outstanding opportunities to yield important scientific information on Hopewell hilltop sites, a type of feature that has not been well studied and is not represented in the park.

The estimated land acquisition cost for the Spruce Hill site is \$450,000 to \$600,000. The property was purchased on June 12 by a coalition of local and national conservation groups headed by the Arc of Appalachia Preserve and the Archaeological Conservancy. These partners are willing sellers. One of the partners, the Arc of Appalachia Preserve, is interested in holding the property outside of the earthworks and managing the site cooperatively with the NPS. This would reduce the acquisition cost for the government. Public facilities, including parking, hiking trails, and wayside exhibits, would be relatively inexpensive, with visitor center and museum needs being served by the Seip Earthworks unit. The cost to develop these facilities would be approximately \$250,000. The Ross County Parks Department has expressed an interest in cooperating with the development of these facilities. However, Federal funding for any new land

acquisition and development would be subject to the budget prioritization process of the National Park Service.

H.R. 2197 authorizes boundary adjustments at the Seip Earthworks unit, allowing for alignment of the boundaries with features that are readily recognizable such as streams and fence lines.

The boundary changes also would help preserve additional riparian habitat along Paint Creek, and forestall the need to surplus excess lands and provide easements across or near the principle resource of the park. Most of the land in the proposed boundary modification at the Seip earthwork has already been purchased by the Federal government as uneconomical remnants or is owned by the Ohio Historical Society. These changes would provide more opportunities for research into habitation and craft production archeological sites and provide the earthwork remains with a greater buffer. Also, inclusion of all of the Ohio Historical Society-owned land at Seip Mound State Memorial would facilitate joint management agreements with the Society. The estimated cost to purchase the remaining private properties is \$250,000 to \$300,000. These properties would be purchased from willing sellers.

Passage of H.R. 2197 would allow the National Park Service to act during a critical period for the preservation of these unique earthworks, a distinctive form of ceremonialism and monumental architecture that involved constructing long earthen walls to enclose very large spaces. These earthworks, developed by an American Indian culture in the Ohio River valley around 200 B.C. to A.D. 500, form a significant example of our nation's heritage.

That concludes my statement. I would be glad to answer any questions that you or other members of the subcommittee might have.